

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Ava Community Energy Sets a New Standard in Sustainable Energy Procurement, Championing High-Road Labor Standards**

**OAKLAND, CA** – On January 17th, Ava Community Energy (formerly East Bay Community Energy) marked a significant milestone with the approval of a groundbreaking policy commitment, placing high-road labor standards at the forefront of their selection process for Energy Offtake Agreements and related projects. This decision to strengthen project selection criteria sets forth a new gold standard in renewable energy procurement, prioritizing employee well-being and community impact while continuing to reflect the organization's dedication to energy sustainability.

The policy was recommended by Ava staff and unanimously adopted by the board following months of collaboration between Ava and the Workforce and Environmental Justice Alliance, a coalition of environmental, environmental justice, and labor advocates including Construction Trades Workforce Initiative (CTWI), the Sierra Club, SLO Climate Coalition, Local Clean Energy Alliance and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County.

This strategic decision marks a pivotal moment for the East Bay workforce as the region looks to ramp up investments in green technology and decarbonization. Ava's new policies emphasize the positive impact CCAs can have on labor conditions, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

Ava engaged in meaningful community dialogue to develop and refine their policies. This is exactly what the structure of CCAs was intended to promote - Boards constituted of locally elected leaders who are responsive to the interests of the community.

Ava is the fourth CC Power member to adopt policies as a result of the efforts of the Workforce and Environmental Justice Alliance coalition. "Ava sets the gold standard as the coalition now looks towards partnering with the Bay Area's other CC Power members" said Tim Frank, CTWI Board Member representing the Building Trades as a Co-Chair of the Workforce and Environmental Justice Alliance.

Highlights in the new selection criteria include:

- Committing to selecting projects and power purchase agreements with strong labor standards, community impact, and climate sustainability measures
- Encouraging high-road labor standards such as paid training, benefits and prevailing wage for all phases of construction including initial construction, operations and maintenance
- Engaging and empowering low-income communities to shape local energy and infrastructure policy
- Commitment to habitat preservation and mitigation

- Ensuring energy partners agree and abide by the same standards that Ava holds

“Ava Community Energy has a great opportunity to create accessible high-road jobs and pathways to economic mobility for all residents, especially those who are minorities, low-income, justice-impacted, women, and veterans,” says Beli Acharya, Executive Director of the Construction Trades Workforce Initiative. “We are very pleased with the reception from CCAs we’ve worked with in the past and look forward to more win-win outcomes in the future.”

For further information, please contact Jordan Ackerman, Senior Policy and Public Affairs Manager at CTWI at [jordan@ctwi-btca.org](mailto:jordan@ctwi-btca.org).

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**About Ava Community Energy:** Ava Community Energy (formerly East Bay Community Energy) is a not-for-profit public agency that exists to provide renewable energy at competitive rates to its customers, serving cities across the East Bay and unincorporated areas of Alameda County.

**About Building and Construction Trades Council of Alameda County (BTCA):** BTCA is a coalition of 28 affiliated unions representing workers in various construction trades, working with affiliated unions to build unity, negotiate agreements with local governments and agencies, and employ and train the next generation of skilled workers.

**About Construction Trades Workforce Initiative:** Construction Trades Workforce Initiative (CTWI) serves as the East Bay’s regional leader in the construction industry, working to advance economic and social justice by strengthening pathways to family sustaining union construction careers for low income communities, BIPOC, women, youth and the formerly incarcerated, achieved through workforce policies, pre-apprenticeship programs, and regional partnerships.